

Thoughts of Chairman Owen

A little red book of sayings...

Introduction

When I first started teaching, longer ago than I care to remember, when Chairman Mao was still around, I wrote a one line piece of advice in a pupil's notebook. I called it, and later examples, "The Thoughts of Chairman Owen". I explained to this now long forgotten pupil that Mao got the idea from me. The "T.O.C.O." have remained a joke that I share with my pupils. Alas, I am now the only one who understands it, as none of my pupils have ever heard of Mao! When I tell them who he was, they politely smile to keep me happy in my old age.

These one-liners are all very useful and and to the point. Any pupil who follows them conscientiously will feel the benefit!

I still use them all the time.

TOCO

- * Practise is the art of intelligent repetition.
- * A good player never does what he/she does not intend doing.
- * Never assume anything is correct.
- * Mistakes don't always sound wrong, but in time always sound right.
- * Speed is not a virtue, accuracy is.
- * When doing technical exercises, play as fast as you can, not as fast as you can't.
- * Slow practise is thinking time not action time.
- * No one ever became a fast runner by walking everywhere.
- * There is a speed at which anybody can play anything correctly.
- * A good player never does what he or she does not intend doing.
- * All mistakes are caused.
- * If you don't make mistakes you can't fail.
- * What you do not notice you cannot practise.
- * Every note must be consciously articulated.
- * Play the piano, don't press it.
- * Good practise stops a ten hour problem from becoming an eleven hour problem.
- * The nature of a pupil's work dictates the kind of lesson the pupil will have.
- * Keep things simple : play what is on the page and what is implied by what is on the page.
- * The more you look, the more you see.
- * When your mouth is open, your ears are closed.

HAPPY PRACTISING!